



Submission on Horizons Regional Council's Draft Annual Plan 2019-20

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Background

Environment Network Manawatu (ENM) is a charitable umbrella organisation dedicated to enhancing the environment within the Manawatu catchment. We receive funding from Palmerston North City Council, Lottery Community, Eastern and Central Community Trust, Community Organisation Grants Scheme and project funding from additional organisations. We currently have over 50 active member groups, all of which are based in the Horizon's catchment.

ENM thanks Horizons Regional Council for the opportunity to comment on your Draft Annual Plan 2019-20.

ENM's Submission

ENM endorses points made in the submission of Manawatu River Source to Sea (S2S) on the topics of Land Management, Freshwater Management, Biosecurity and Biodiversity, and Compliance Monitoring.

1. Climate Change

- We also agree that Climate Change is here. Climate Change needs to be considered across all areas of Horizons' business. We fully support the plan to continue climate research to better understand the likely impacts on this region. We strongly support the development of a climate change strategy for this region as a high priority.
- Adaptation to climate change impacts and strategies for climate mitigation are both hugely important. On the mitigation front there will be many ways in which Horizons can support the reduction of net GHG emissions across the region. We look forward to the opportunity to comment on the strategy, assuming there will be a consultation process.

2. Transport

As noted (p 87, Supporting information), New Zealand has the highest level of personal vehicle dependency in the developed world and this poses challenges in terms of local environmental impacts, climate change implications (vehicle emissions) and social equity.

To reduce people's dependence on private vehicles for personal travel we need to promote more sustainable (and affordable) modes such as public transport, walking and cycling and to reduce the economy's dependence on fossil fuels.

2.1 Passenger Transport

- Bus services are needed by members of the community with limited access to transport options but it is also really important to find ways to encourage/enable those who have more options to leave the car at home and take the bus for some of their trips.

- Continued evaluation of the bus service based on new data is a good approach - for that reason we support the implementation of a new Electronic Ticketing System to provide better data to inform future route trials/ changes. However we note that there are certain threshold levels of comfort, convenience, information and routine that must be provided before people's preferences will change. Data collected on sub-optimal service levels would be a poor indicator of demand for good service.
- We agree that passenger services contribute to more connected communities and have economic benefits (for example by enabling access to work and education). As less affluent communities are more reliant on public transport, we ask on what basis was it decided to not go ahead with the Highbury/Takaro trial (splitting into two smaller routes) in 2019-20? If this was purely due to budget constraints, will this trial commence in the 2020-21 year?
- We see that there will be a review of the Massey timetable. We assume that MUSA, which has advocated strongly for bus services that better meet the needs of students, will be involved in this review.

2.2 Road Safety Education:

- We support this activity in general.
- We would like to see more done to encourage active transport including cycling. Safety concerns do stop people from riding bikes.
- We support the adult and school cycle training programme however we also want to see programmes that **educate drivers** about sharing the road and raises awareness about the needs of vulnerable road users.

2.3 Rail:

- We support Horizons' commitment to continue funding for the Capital Connection in Year 2 and 3. It is important that the service continues until a more long term solution can be found.
- We support work towards a longer term enhanced passenger rail connection between Palmerston North and Wellington.
- We also support Horizons' advocacy for rail as an alternative to roads for the movement of freight throughout the region.